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PREPARATORY COMMITTEE FOR THE UNITED NATIONS
CONFERENCE ON ENVIRONMENT AND DEVELOPMENT
Third session
Geneva, 12 August-4 September 1991
Working Group I
Agenda item 3 (a)

LAND RESOURCES
DEFORESTATION

A non-legally binding authoritative statement of principles for a global consensus on the management, conservation and development of all types of forest

Proposal submitted by Ghana*

PREAMBLE

(a) The subject of forestry is related to the entire gamut of environmental and development issues including the right to development.

(b) Deliberation on forestry issues should be examined in a holistic and balanced manner within the overall context of environment and development, taking into consideration the multiple uses of forest, including traditional uses, and the likely economic and social stress when these uses are constrained or restricted.

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* On behalf of the States Members of the United Nations that are members of the Group of 77.

(c) The UNCED process is the most appropriate forum for conclusive decision pertaining to global consensus on forests which should form the basis for all other negotiations involving forests.

PRINCIPLES/ELEMENTS

1. Principle 21 of the Stockholm Declaration - "States have, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations and the principles of international law, the sovereign right to exploit their own resources pursuant to their own environmental policies, and the responsibility to ensure that activities within their jurisdiction or control do not cause damage to the environment of other States or of areas beyond the limits of national jurisdiction."

2. Forests include areas under permanent vegetative cover, ecosystems and human settlements and the States have the inalienable right to utilize, manage and develop them in accordance with their development needs and national policies and legislation including the need to convert some of these areas for other uses in their overall socio-economic development based on rational land-use policies.

3. Efforts towards the greening of the world by all countries particularly in developed countries should be enhanced.

4. All types of forests play a major role in maintaining the ecological balance at local, national, regional and global levels.

5. All types of forests perform a wide range of social functions, including for forest dwellers, local communities and indigenous people who use and sustain forest resources and systems.

6. All types of forest play an important role in meeting the energy requirements particularly in developing countries.

7. The multiple roles must be balanced to ensure that forests continue to function in a sustainable manner.

8. Adequate conservation and sustainable development of all types of forests is closely related to the promotion of a supportive international economic climate conducive to sustained and environmentally sound development in all countries, which include, inter alia, change in the unsustainable patterns of production and consumption particularly in industrialized countries, and eradication of poverty and promotion of food security in developing countries.

9. Efforts should be undertaken towards the greening of the world by all countries particularly in developed countries through reforestation and afforestation.

10. The external indebtedness of developing countries, the phenomenon of net transfer of resources from developing to developed countries and the low commodity prices are major factors that reduce their capacity and ability to manage, conserve and develop their forest resources.

11. Developing countries should be compensated for their opportunity costs foregone and the comparatively higher cost entailed by increasing forest cover as well as sustainable management and conversation of their forest resources.

12. New and additional financial resources should be provided to developing countries through a global fund to enable them to sustainably manage, conserve and develop their forests' resources including afforestation, reforestation and combating, deforestation, forest and land degradation.

13. The transfer of environmentally sound technology to developing countries, including on concessional and preferential terms, should be promoted to enable developing countries to enhance their endogenous capacity, to enable them to better manage, conserve and develop their forest resources.

14. International cooperation in areas of scientific research and technological development applications in the field of sustainable forest management, conservation and development should be strengthened through effective modalities.

15. Removal of tariff barriers, the provision of better market access and better prices for higher value-added forest products and their local processing should be encouraged to enable producer countries to better conserve and manage their renewable forest resources.

16. All forms of unilateral actions to restrict and/or ban the use of timber and other forest products should be removed as such actions are counter-productive towards long-term sustainable forest management.

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LAND RESOURCES: SOIL LOSS

Proposal from the delegations of Bolivia, Colombia, Chile, Ecuador, Peru and Venezuela

Programme for the regulation and conservation of catchment areas in mountainous regions

Basis for action

Mountainous areas have environmental and ecological features that are extremely significant in terms of the existence of unique ecosystems, capacity for the generation of water resources, and a historical relationship between man and nature of incalculable value for the sustained use of the resources of these regions. In that sense the Andean catchment areas add to these characteristics exceptional and extreme biological diversity, as well as the existence of soil and water resources of high quality over a variety of temperature zones. This has resulted in a high percentage of the populations of the Andean countries being concentrated in these catchment areas, and has afforded scope for the development of a good proportion of their economic activities.

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In spite of that fact, the high population pressure, the lack of plans for the regulation of catchment areas in mountainous regions, the lack of financial resources, and also the use of inadequate foreign technologies have resulted in environmental deterioration that could have undesirable effects on the ecological balance, the economy and development of the mountainous regions and other more remote regions such as the Amazonian plains associated with the Andean blind drainages.

Objectives

The Andean countries propose a global strategy for the regulation and management of the catchment areas in mountainous regions, the main aim of which is to bring sustainable exploitation of the natural resources of the mountains into line with the objectives of economic and social development, retrieving and incorporating the relationships between man and nature that the indigenous societies have developed over the course of time.

Activities

(a) To formulate and develop a programme for the regulation and conservation of catchment areas in the Andean zones and in other mountain systems so that all the main mountain complexes may have regulation and conservation plans by the year 2000.

(b) To further the establishment and consolidation of national catchment area agencies in mountainous regions that will make possible more effective action at local levels with community participation.

(c) To create a network of institutions responsible for management of the regulation and conservation of catchment areas in mountainous regions.

(d) To contribute to the outlining and concertation of projects for the regulation and conservation of catchment areas of mountainous regions extending through more than one country.

(e) To make studies on the sustainable development of catchments and high mountain lakes.

(f) To facilitate financial cooperation and the transfer of appropriate environmental technology within and outside the network.

(g) To promote the investigation and development of alternative sources of energy as a substitute for wood.

(h) To develop programmes for the protection and study of the forests in mountainous regions.

(i) To contribute to the proper economic use of the water produced by catchment areas in mountainous regions.

(j) To concert the use of technologies for the protection and sustainable development of the mountain slopes, particularly those connected with agriculture and cattle grazing in these regions.

(k) To draft and carry out global programmes of disaster prevention in mountainous regions.

(l) To establish programmes for restocking with species of wild animals and also for re-establishment of the plant cover and reforestation in mountainous regions.

(m) To produce research programmes for erosion control in production systems in slope zones.

(n) To promote the active participation of the population in joint catchment area programmes, with particular emphasis on the role to be played by women.

(o) To stimulate ecological tourist programmes and mountain holidaying activities.